



**Government of Canada / Government of Alberta
News Release**

BSE DISEASE INVESTIGATION IN ALBERTA

Edmonton AB., May 20, 2003 -The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has quarantined an Alberta farm in an investigation of a single case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), commonly known as mad cow disease.

This case of one cow was detected as part of Canada's ongoing BSE surveillance program. Alberta Agriculture officials tested a cow that had been condemned at slaughter. No meat from the cow entered the food chain. Preliminary tests performed at a provincial laboratory and at the CFIA's National Centre for Foreign Animal Disease were unable to rule out BSE. The CFIA sent specimens to the World Reference Laboratory at Weybridge, United Kingdom, which has verified the presence of BSE.

The CFIA and the Province of Alberta are investigating the animal's origin and how its remains were processed. Information suggests that the risk to human health and the possibility of transmission to other Canadian cattle from this case are low.

"Immediate action has been taken to safeguard Canadian consumers and the Canadian livestock population," said Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclief. "Federal officials, in cooperation with provincial and industry partners, are conducting a comprehensive investigation and taking all necessary steps to control the situation."

"We remain confident in our beef and cattle industry and we will support both the CFIA and our cattle industry in eliminating this disease from Canada," said Shirley McClellan, Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

The affected herd will be depopulated once the necessary samples are obtained for the purposes of the ongoing investigation. Any additional herds that are found to be at risk as a result of the investigation will also be depopulated.

This is a comprehensive investigation to trace the origin of the cow and determine how it was processed, which will provide information to control any potential spread of disease. The investigation involves thorough scrutiny of records at the farm level, abattoir, rendering plant and feed mills.

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BSE Fact Sheet: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anim/hsean/disemala/bseesb/bseesbe.shtml>

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